

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 EUR-12 ARA-10 SES-02 SSO-00 INRE-00
NSCE-00 SAA-01 /068 W
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O 011200Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5538
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
USMTM RIYADH IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 3765

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE, SA
SUBJ: MEETING OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MURRAY
WITH YAR PRESIDENT SALIH

BEGIN SUMMARY: YAR PRESIDENT SALIH, SHOWING MIXTURE
OF STRONG DESIRE FOR US HELP AND IMPATIENCE WITH US
DELAY, TOLD DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MURRAY THAT WHAT
WAS NEEDED NOW WAS US TEAM AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE
AGREEMENTS, SET OUT SCHEDULES OF OPERATIONS, AND SEE ITS
WORK QUICKLY LEAD TO ARRIVAL OF TRAINING TEAMS AND EQUIP-
MENT. POSSIBLY TO EMPHASIZE NEED FOR ACTION RATHER THAN
WORDS, SALIH CITED OTHER COMMITMENTS BY YAR FOREIGN
MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER, SAID APPOINTMENTS WITH
THESE TWO WERE IMPOSSIBLE PRIOR TO MURRAY'S 11:00 A.M.
DEPARTURE ON 1 AUGUST. END SUMMARY.

1. ON 31 JULY YAR PRESIDENT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH
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RECEIVED DEP ASST SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ROBERT MURRAY
ALONG WITH CHARGE RANSOM, SANA DATT RUSZKIEWICZ,
ISA REP LT. COL. WILLIAMS AND JCS REP LT. COL. MCKIM.
FOR YEMENI SIDE, MAJOR MOHAMMED SANABANI,
COMMANDER OF 7TH ARMORED, AND CAPTAIN MOHAMMED
ANSI, SALIH AIDE, ATTENDED.

2. MURRAY BEGAN WITH GENERAL DESCRIPTION RECENT ACTION RE YEMEN IN WASHINGTON AND RIYADH, SAYING HE COULD CONVEY STRONG IMPRESSION OF DESIRE ON PART OF BOTH US AND SAUDI GOVERNMENT TO HELP YEMEN AND GOVERNMENT OF SALIH. HE SAID HE WOULD RETURN ON AUGUST 1 TO TAIF FOR MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS IN WHICH RUSZKIEWICZ, WILLIAMS AND MCKIM HAD PARTICIPATED FOR PREVIOUS SEVERAL DAYS AT WORKING LEVELS IN MODA. MURRAY PRESENTED OUTLINE OF USG PROPOSALS -- NOTING THAT HE COULD NOT YET CONVEY FINAL AGREEMENT -- AND SOUGHT YAR VIEWS ON SITUATION IN YEMENS. HE SUGGESTED STARTING WITH LATTER.

3. SALIH SAID IN MATTER OF FACT MANNER THAT HE HAD ALREADY EXPLAINED HIS VIEWS ON SITUATION IN BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN TO CHARGE AND HOPED US DELEGATION WAS BRINGING ITS DETAILED PROPOSALS FOR ARMS AID. NEED FOR ACTION RATHER THJG BRRKKJLVULBPG. THREAT FROM SOUTH WAS REAL.

4. ANOTHER ATTEMPT ON PART OF MURRAY TO DRAW SALIH INTO GENERAL POLITICAL DISCUSSION WAS MET BY SHAKE OF HEAD, WAVE OF HAND. HE SAID QUESTION THAT MATTERED WAS WHETHER US WOULD DEAL WITH YEMEN DIRECTLY OR THROUGH SAUDI FRIENDS.

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5. MURRAY OUTLINED IN GENERAL TERMS PROPOSALS WHICH AUTHORIZED IN STATE 189537 AND SAID THAT PROPOSALS GAVE SUBSTANCE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE OF SUPPORT. THE PROPOSALS AMOUNTED TO CHANGE OF POLICY ON PART OF US GOVERNMENT TOWARD A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN YEMEN. PROPOSALS WOULD CREATE DIRECT US-YEMENI RELATIONSHIP ALTHOUGH ONE WHICH WOULD PRESERVE CLOSE COORDINATION WITH SAUDIS. MURRAY SAID US AIM WAS IN FACT GENUINE TRILATERAL PROGRAM AND HIS VISIT TO SANA IN MIDDLE OF TALKS WITH SAUDIS SYMBOLIZED THIS EFFORT ON OUR PART.

6. IN LENGTHY EXCHANGE (MEMCON UNDER PREPARATION) SALIH REITERATED HIS POSITION AS SET OUT EARLIER TO CHARGE (SEE SANA 3454 AND 3679). WHILE SALIH MENTIONED NEED FOR US TO COMMIT ITSELF TO STAND NEXT TO YAR IF ATTACKED BY SOUTH, HE PUT EMPHASIS IN 31 JULY MEETING ON ARMS AGREEMENTS THAT WILL BE EQUIVALENT OF COMMITMENTS HE SAYS SOVIETS AND CUBANS HAVE MADE TO SOUTH YEMEN. HE WANTS CONSPICUOUS AMERICAN PRESENCE TO REPLACE VIRTUALLY ON MAN-FOR-MAN BASIS PRESENT SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE TEAM. HE WANTS, AT LEAST AS GOAL, ARMY WHICH WILL MATCH SOUTH YEMENI

FORCES GUN FOR GUN, PLANE FOR PLANE, AND SHIP FOR SHIP.

7. MURRAY REITERATED ASSURANCES OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND CONVEYED HIS VIVID IMPRESSION OF SAUDI DESIRE TO BE OF AS MUCH ASSISTANCE AS POSSIBLE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS ACTIVITY WOULD NOT ONLY HELP IMPROVE DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES OF YEMEN, BUT CONVEY TO ENEMIES OF YAR US DETERMINATION TO BE OF ASSISTANCE. THIS WOULD BE WELL APPRECIATED BY THE SOVIETS. HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF PROGRAM WHICH WAS PRACTICAL AND DID NOT EXCEED CAPACITY OF YEMENIS TO ABSORB.

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8. SALIH WAS NOT SATISFIED. FOUR F-5B'S, HE SAID, DO NOT PROVIDE HIM WITH FORCE THAT COULD MEET OR EVEN DETER MUCH LARGER AIR FORCE IN SOUTH. VULCANS DO NOT PROVIDE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM LIKE SAM MISSILES ALREADY IN PLACE IN SOUTH. LAW'S DO NOT COMPENSATE FOR SHORT-COMINGS IN YAR TANK FORCE. SALIH, WITH SHOW OF IMPATIENCE, DEALT WITH MENTION OF MACHINEGUNS AND MORTARS WITH WAVE OF HIS HAND.

9. WARMING TO HIS THEME, SALIH RETURNED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO NEED FOR US TEAM TO COME PREPARED TO SIGN AGREEMENTS, SET OUT PROGRAMS OF WORK, BRING IN EXPERTS IN ALL FIELDS, AND, IN GENERAL, MOVE BEYOND STAGE OF TALKS TO STAGE OF ACTION. MURRAY SAID THAT ACTION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY. WE WERE MAKING ARRANGEMENTS, IN

CONSULTATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA, FOR EARLY DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT AND FOR SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING ASSISTANCE WHEREVER NECESSARY. DELIVERIES AND TRAINING WOULD BEGIN VERY SOON, PROBABLY AS SOON AS SEPTEMBER, EVEN THOUGH IN SOME CASES IT WAS NECESSARY TO TAKE THE SECRET

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EQUIPMENT FROM OUR OWN FORCES. MURRAY SAID HE WAS SENT HERE FROM WASHINGTON TO CONSULT WITH YEMEN AND WITH SAUDI ARABIA TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF EXPEDITING AND IMPROVING OUR ASSISTANCE, IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO HIM. DID PRESIDENT SALIH NOT THINK THIS WAS A POSITIVE RESPONSE? SALIH SAID HE THANKED US FOR OUR ASSISTANCE. IT WAS APPRECIATED. IT WAS NEEDED. BUT HE NEEDED SIGNED AGREEMENTS AND QUICK ACTION.

10. SALIH THEN INITIATED DISCUSSION OF SOVIET MISSION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO DEVELOPMENT OF US ROLE. SPEAKING IN VERY FORCEFUL TERMS, HE SAID HE SAW SOVIETS AS "SOURCE OF DANGER," BOTH TO HIM AND TO YEMEN. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THEIR PRESENCE IN YAR AS WELL AS THEIR PRESENCE IN PDYR. HE SAID HE WANTED TO GET RID OF THEM BUT THAT AN ALTERNATIVE HAD TO BE AVAILABLE FOR HIM TO TAKE THIS STEP. MURRAY RESPONDED BY SAYING US DID NOT TIE ITS AID TO SUCH A DECISION BY SALIH. INSTEAD, THIS DECISION WAS HIS TO MAKE ON BASIS OF YEMENI INTERESTS. MURRAY MADE OBSERVATION THAT HE AGREED SOVIETS MEANT SALIH NO GOOD AND WOULD WORK AGAINST HIM.

11. MEETING BEGAN WITH SALIH SMILING, ALMOST EXPANSIVE, CLEARLY EXPECTING FROM UNIFORMED OFFICERS AND HIGH-LEVEL DOD CIVILIAN OFFICIAL TO HEAR DETAILS OF US PROPOSALS FOR AID. MEETING ENDED WITH RATHER ABRUPT STATEMENT BY SALIH THAT FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE INVOLVED THE NEXT DAY WITH PARLIAMENT AND UNABLE TO MEET WITH MURRAY BEFORE HIS 11:00 O'CLOCK DEPARTURE FROM SANA. (COMMENT: PARLIAMENT MEETING IS REAL BUT AMERICANS PRESENT SECRET

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INTERPRETED SALIH STATEMENT TO BE EFFORT TO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE SALIH PUT ON ACTION FROM US RATHER THAN WORDS.) MEETING WHICH LASTED HOUR AND A QUARTER CONCLUDED WITH EXPRESSION OF THANKS BY SALIH AND RE-

AFFIRMATION SEVERAL TIMES OF HIS STRONG DESIRE TO
COOPERATE WITH US.

12. COMMENTS BY SEPTTEL.
RANSOM

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